

A
LETTER

TO THE
AUTHOR of a SERMON,
ENTITLED,

A SERMON Preach'd

AT THE

FUNERAL

Of Her Late MAJESTY

Queen MARY,

Of ever Blessed Memory.

SIR,

When I heard of the Sickness of the Late Illustrious Princess, whom I had never fail'd to recommend to God, in my Daily Prayers, and that your self was Her Confessor, I could not but hope, that at least on Her Death-bed, you would have dealt faithfully with Her.

But when I had read the SERMON, you preach'd at Her FUNERAL, I was heartily griev'd, to find my self disappointed, and God knows, how bitterly I bewail'd in Secret the manner of Her Death; and Reflecting again and again, on your Conduct of Her Soul, methought a Spirit of slumber seem'd to have possess'd you, otherwise it was im-

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possible for one, who so well *understood* the Duty of a Spiritual Guide, as your self, who had *such happy Opportunities, and such signal Encou-ragements*, to Practise it in Her Case, should so grossly fail in your Performance, as either to overlook, or wilfully to omit that which all the World saw besides your self, and expected from you, and was of great Importance to Her Salvation.

You are a Person of Noted Abilities, and had a full *Knowledge of your Duty*, you had been many years a Parish Priest, and exercised your Function with good repute, no one could be better vers'd, in the *Office for the Visitation of the Sick* than your self, and the *Sick Person* was no stranger to you, and you very well knew Her whole Story.

As you had a full *Knowledge of the Person, and of your Duty*, so you had *happy Opportunities* to have put that *Duty* in Practise.

You had free and frequent AccesSES to Her, at your Pleasure; and on *Monday when the flattering Disease occasioned some Hopes*, but especially on the next Day, the *Festival of Christ's Birth*, when those *Hopes* were rais'd to a kind of *Assurance*, p. 25. and continued so till Night, the *Peculiar favour of Heaven*, seem'd to have indulg'd you, all that inestimable Day, on purpose, that you might carefully Employ it, in clearing Her Conscience with God, and Man, and in perfecting Her Preparations for Eternity; which had She recover'd, were as Necessary, to render *Her Life Holy, and Happy, as Her Death.*

Your Joy enduring but a Day, and that Day being clos'd with a dismal Night, you gave Her the *Warning* of Her approaching Death, which you say *She receiv'd, with a Courage agreeable to the strength of Her Faith*, P. 26. You were set a *Watchman* over Her, and if you did not give Her *the Warning of Her Sin* also, especially when you had so proper a time for doing it, and saw Her so capable of receiving it, *God will require Her Blood at your hands.*

You had this advantage also, which is often wanting to such Persons, that in the Visits you made Her you did not find Her Delirious, and the Orders She gave for Prayers, p. 24. Her calling for Prayers a third time, when She fear'd she had slept the time before, the many most Christian things She said, p. 26. Her appointing Psalms, a Chapter concerning *Trust in God*, and a Sermon more than once, to be read by Her, p. 29. are signs She was not, at least that she was not so, in the Intervals wherein you officiated by Her.

'Tis true she was often drowsy, but she was so very sensible of Her drowsiness, that *she call'd for Prayers before the time, for fear that she should not be long compos'd*, p. 28. and when ever you apply'd your self to Her, she was wakeful enough. You

You said indeed, p. 27. That at the Receiving the *Holy Eucharist*, she found her self in a dozing Condition, but add, that she presently stirr'd up Her attention, and from thence forth to the end of the Office, had a perfect Command of Her understanding, and was intent upon the Great Work, she was going about: And methinks Sir, if you had been jealous over her Soul, with a Godly Jealousy, when you gave Her the *Vaticum*, and saw that she had then a perfect Command of her Understanding, and that she was intent; you had another fit Season offer'd you by Heaven, to have minded Her of any, but probable defects in Her Repentance, and to have Exhorted Her, to a short Supplemental Confession.

Nay to Her very last, she seem'd not wholly uncapable of any pious Intimations you might have given her, for her Understanding continued to that degree, That nothing of Impertinence, scarce a number of disjointed words were heard from Her; insomuch, that she said a devout *AMEN*, to that very Prayer, in which her Pious Soul was recommended to that God who gave it, p. 49. So that your own Sermon will testify against you, that you had very happy Opportunities, of directing her Conscience; I must add, that you had as Signal Encouragements also.

You had to deal with a Person, whose Knowledge and Wisdom you justly Command, p. 3. and who might easily have been Convinced, if in any one Instance, she had mistaken her Duty.

You had to deal with one, whose Piety, Charity, and Humility, you in many respects deservedly Magnifie, p. 10. I only wish you had added her Justice also, to have made Her Character compleat; However, those three Virtues, were powerful Inducements, to have us'd a Conscientious freedom with Her.

You had, as appears by the Character you give Her, a Pious, Charitable, Humble Soul, under your Care, a Subject most happily dispos'd to work on, who had always been very Reverent and Attentive at Sermons, p. 9. who had an Averseness to Flattery, p. 12. and who would thankfully have received, any Pious, or Charitable, or humble Admonition, you had given Her.

I now beseech you Sir, to spend a few thoughtful Minutes, in comparing your Performance, as you yourself represent it, in your own Sermon, with your Knowledge, with the Opportunities, and Encouragements you had, and with the Rubrick of the Church.

You mention a very Religious Saying which fell from Her, That she had Learn'd from Her Youth a true Doctrine, That Repentance was not to be put off to a Dear-b-bed, p. 26. But it was your Duty, considering the Deceitfulness of all Hearts, and the usual Infirmities, and For-

getfulness, and Indisposedness of Sick Persons, to have Supplied all Her Overights, and Omissions, and to have Examin'd the Truth of Her Repentance, whether she truly Repented of her Sins, and where you knew any thing of Moment, which had escap'd Her Observation, you ought to have been Her Remembrancer.

I therefore challenge you to answer before God and the World, Did you know of no weighty Matter which ought to have troubled this Princesses Conscience, tho' at present she seem'd not to have felt it, and for which, you ought to have mov'd her to a special Confession, in order to *Absolution* ?

Were you satisfied, that she was in *Charity* with all the World ? Did you know of no Enmity between Her and Her Sister ?

Did you know of no Person who ever offended *Her*, whom she was to forgive ? Did you know of no one Person whom she had offended, and of whom she was to ask Forgiveness ? Did you know of no one Injury or Wrong she had done to any Man, to whom she was to make *Amends*, to the uttermost of her Power ?

Was the whole *Revolution* manag'd, with that Purity of Intention, that perfect Innocence, that exact Justice, that tender Charity, and that unreproachable Veracity, that there was nothing amiss in it ; no remarkable Failings, nothing that might deserve one penitent Reflection ?

You cauot, you dare not say it ; and if you should, out of your own mouth I can condemn you ; for you your self in your serious Intervals, have pass'd as severe a Censure on the *Revolution*, as any of those they call *Jacobites* could do ; you have said, more than once, *That it was all an Unrighteous thing* ; Why did you not then deal sincerely with this Dying Princess, and tell Her so, when you must needs be sensible, that steering Her Conscience wrong, you ship-wreck'd your own.

If then Sir you consider, *The happy Opportunities* you have lost, *the Signal Encouragements* you have neglected, and the *Tremendous Hazard* to which you have expos'd the precious Soul, of this Illustrious Princess by your Unfaithfulness ; If you lay to Heart how much you have acted against your own Knowledge and Convictions, what ill Example you have given to the Clergy, what Scandal to all good men, what Wounds to our most Holy Religion, and what Occasions to the Enemy to Blaspheme, what have you to do, but to testifie your Repentance, before God and the World, and to mourn in Sackcloth and Ashes, all the Remainder of your days ?

What was it Sir, that mov'd you to act thus notoriously against your own Conscience ? Was it the fear you had, of losing the Favour

Favour of the Court, which made you rather venture the Indignation of Heaven, even that fear was vain, for it had been no offence against the Government, to have persuad'd a dying *Daughter*, to have bestowed one Compassionate Prayer on her afflicted *Father*, had he been never so Unnatural, though the Case was here quite contrary, for He was one of the tenderest *Fathers* in the world.

Besides, her Illustrious *Confort*, who manifested so very great and worthy a Passion for her, would I dare say, have had nothing omitted, which might have been thought conducible, to her Eternal Happiness; and a Conscientious Faithful Confessor, especially on the Death-bed, is *one of a thousand*, who Will always be desired and valued, and rever'd. Believe me Sir, you have given the World reason to conclude, that your own Conscience misgave you, being feasible, that *in reproving her, you must have reproach'd your self.*

You say, *She was so judicious and Devout a Saint, the degenerate Church of Rome can by no means shew us*, p. 9. but surely it had been Prudence in you, to have wav'd that Comparison, for shou'd you chance hereafter, to blame that Church for Canonizing *Thomas a Becket*, for which she really is blame-worthy, 'tis obvious for her, to make this appropriate Reply: to you, that 'tis as justifiable in her to *Saint such a Subject*, as for you, to *Saint such a Daughter*.

You tell us she was one whom I am well assured had all the Duty in the World, for other Relations, which after Long, and Laborious Consideration, she judg'd consistent, with her Obligations to God, and to her Country, p. 15.

The Consideration then which she used, to reconcile her Judgment to the *Revolution*, was it seems, *Long and Laborious*, notwithstanding the assistance of her new Casuists, it being no easie matter, to overcome the contrary Remonstrances of Nature, and of her own Conscience, and to unlearn those Evangelical *Maxims*, which were carefully taught her, by the Faithful Guides of her Youth, others might begin to instill opposite Principles into her, others might Confirm her, but the finishing strokes were reserved for you.

But what do you mean Sir, by *other Relations*, we may guess that you mean *her Royal Father, Mother-in-Law, and Brother*, but you are at liberty to say, you mean any *other Relations* if you pfease, you give us ambiguous and general words only, when you should have given us, most express and particular.

All the Duty in the World is a comprehensive term, but wherein Sir, did any part of *all that Duty* appear? Why are you not so just to her, and

and to your self, as to give us some of those Compassionate, and melting Expressions of Filial Duty, which flow'd from her on that Subject ? Why do you not produce some instances of her *Mildness and Mercifulness to her Enemies*, p. 16. and whom you knew she treated as such, though their Crime was their being her Fathers Friends, they would have been much for her Honour ; would have given great satisfaction to all good People, would have convinc'd the world, that the manner of her Death had been in all respects truly *Christian*, p. 23. would have been much for your own Reputation, and much for the Credit of the *Revolution* in which you are as great a *Zealot* as a *Gainer*.

If you were so well assur'd of all that Duty, what dreadful negligence were you guilty of, in not putting her in mind of it on her Death-bed ? Methinks Sir, you are not just to her, when you give us instances of her *Charity*, to several sorts of indigent People, and to Strangers, which all the World knew, and give us no instances of even her *Natural Affection*, to her own Royal Father, of which all the World doubted ; when had you suggested that Duty to her, as you ought to have done, she would have shew'd her self a tender-hearted *Daughter*, and would have been extrely afflicted, for having been instrumental to her Father's Calamity.

It is far from my intentions here to dispute the *Lawfulness of the Revolution*, yet I may say that I never met with any so Bigotted to it, who would undertake to justify all the part, which she as a *Daughter* had in it, and I am perswaded that it would mightily puzzle you, to tell us in particular, what those *Obligations* were, which she had to God, and to her Country, which were inconsistent with her Filial Duty.

You complain p. 17. *Great is our loss of a most Pious Queen*, in an *Atheistical, and Prophane Age*, in which the *Seeds of Impiety*, which have been sowing for some years, have sprung up in greater plenty than ever ; but Sir, did not your Heart smite you, when you uttered this Complaint; for I would fain know whether any thing has more contributed, to render the *Age Atheistical and Prophane*, or more promoted that fatal *Plenty*, than the Prevarications of your self, and your Time-serving Brethren.

You take notice more than once, of the shortening the life of this Illustrious Princess, that she was taken away in the midst of her days, p. 18. at thirty three years old, p. 32. in the flower of her Age, p. 33. but you take no notice of that which most probably occasioned it, for the Fifth Commandment is not to be evaded, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, (which is the first Commandment with Promise) that it may be well with Thee, and thou mayest live long on the Earth, and if any, even Princess,

Princes, for the Command makes no exception, do visibly *Dishonour Father and Mother, and their lives are cut short*, the very Command of God assigns the cause of it, and I hope the surviving Princess will consider, and take warning, and Repent, lest God be provoked, *to cut her life as short as her Sisters.*

You say p. 30. *That having like David serv'd her own Generation, by the Will of God she fell asleep*; and if you had been a true *Nathan* to her, the Similitude had been very proper, but her Virtue having like *David's*, suffer'd an *Eclipse*, you took no care that it should break out again, in as *Conspicuous* a Repentance.

You mention *the strong Hopes you have of her everlasting felicity*, p. 32. but as you managed her Conscience, you should rather have call'd them, *strong Presumptions*, *I have Hopes of her everlasting Felicity as well as you*, tho' not at all grounded on your Guidance, but on the Infinite mercy of God, who makes most gracious abatement for all our Infirmities, and for all the degrees of excusability we can plead, and when I consider her conjugal Love and Awe, the horrid misrepresentations made to her, of her Royal Father, the various, and studied Trains laid to delude her, the plausible pretences of Religion, of Scripture, and of the Glory of God, which she heard daily inculcated, and the unfaithfulness of her Guides, who had wholly possessed her Ear, together with her subdued will, her soft and tender Sex, and Temper, her well-meant tho' misguided Zeal, the Piety of her Inclinations, and her ardent Desire, that *her Soul might be without spot presented to God*, which she manifested, *in ordering that Collect to be read twice every day*, p. 24. I have *Hopes*, that God accepted of her general Repentance, and by a super-effluence of Grace supply'd the defects of it.

What therefore I have said, is not in the least to derogate, from any of her Virtues, but to Expostulate with you, for being the occasion, that they did not shine out in their full Lustre; and whether such *Shepherds* may not be said, *to feed themselves rather than the Flock*, whether your Behaviour to this dying Princess, does not reach those Expressions of the Prophet, *Of crying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace*, and of *daubing with untemper'd Mortar*, whether it is not *Healing a Spiritual Hurt slightly*; Let all my Reverend Brethren of the Clergy, who are untainted with the *Latitudinarian Leven*, whether they are *Possess'd* of their Benefices, or *Depriv'd*, be the Judges.

Before I take my leave, I cannot but remark that spiteful Reflection, you

you bestow'd on the poor Sufferers, which you thus express; *And Domestick Discontent reigning in those, whose Resentments, are stronger than their Reason.* p. 18.

The Persons whom you thus Characterise will tell you, that 'tis much easier, for you, to revile their Reasons, than to Answer them, of which you are so very sensible, that no one labours more industriously than your self, to debar them the liberty of the Press.

As for their Resentments, the greatest they have at present, are against your self, not for your Promotion, which I know none of them that envy, but for your misguidance of that Illustrious Prince's whose everlasting Happiness they Prayed for, and whose untimely Death they deplore.

In the mean time Sir, none of that dirt, which you cast at the faithful Remnant will stick, but will recoil on your self, and I have reason to believe, that *That Great Prince*, whom such as you, had rather flatter, than imitate, does esteem them at least Honest Men, and indeed in their being tender of their former Oaths, they have followed that *Illustrious Example*, which he himself set them; for there was a time, when he being Prince of *Orange*, had the Sovereignty of the Seven Provinces offered him, and offered him by a Power, which would have put him into Possession, and he rejected that tempting offer, with a most Heroick and Christian Answer, to this purpose, *That he had lately taken an Oath to be true to his Countrey, which he would by no means violate.*

It was *Wisdom* not that which is *Earthly*, but that which is *from above*, which taught the Prince of *Orange*, to prefer a good *Conscience* before a *Kingdom, a Blissful and an Eternal Crown, before one that was Vexatious and Transitory*; and may the same *Divine Wisdom* in his present Circumstances, vouchsafe to be his Councillor; If then, he when a Prince was so *Consciencious* in observing his Oath to the States, can he have an ill Opinion of Priests, and of Bishops, who are alike *Consciencious* in observing their Oaths? 'Tis improbable he should, unless he has such *Confessors* as your self, to exasperate him against them; but from such *Confessors*, *Phineas* used to deliver him.

God of his Great mercy grant, that what I have written, may awaken you out of your *Somber*, and conduce to your *Repentance*, the only Preservative against all those *Woes*, which are denounced against careless *Shepherds*.

March the 29th
1695.

Your faithful Friend in
our Common Saviour.